



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## NOTES AND COMMENTS.

---

### I.

EVERY thoughtful American citizen recognizes the bad effects of illiterate voting, and the question arises, how can the nation free itself of the evil? The answer is promptly given, that, as a basis of presumed intelligence, the voter ought to be able to read and write; but that rule could not be enforced at the present time, as it would infringe privileges that illiterates now enjoy, and thus, being *ex post facto* in its effect, would be null and void. This difficulty can be obviated by the enactment of two laws: one requiring every young man on attaining his majority to be able to read and write, before he is permitted to vote; the other to require the same qualification of the foreigner. These laws would be prospective in their effect, and would not interfere with the rights of the present illiterates. The good influence of such a regulation on young men would commence at once, while it would equally stimulate the foreigner desiring to become a citizen. In the latter case, the committees as now usually appointed before an important election, by political managers, to ferret out foreigners in order to have them naturalized, would in addition be instructed to teach them to read and write if necessary.

As the regulation is now, neither the illiterate young men in the rural districts nor the young roughs in our cities, have any special motive to qualify themselves to become voters; and it must have a demoralizing effect upon both these classes to be advanced to the dignity of citizenship without any qualification whatever, except that of arriving at a certain age, which costs them nothing. The same rule applies to the foreigner, who has only to wait five years, during which time he can prepare himself. On the contrary, such requirement would stimulate the self-respect and ambition of both these classes to become citizens in good and regular standing, and in consequence they would value their citizenship the more highly, because they did something, and that of an ennobling character, in order to obtain its privileges. Under the present system there are two reasons why the hope is fallacious of our ever obtaining an entire voting population that will be intelligent in the ordinary sense of the term: first, the continuous influx of illiterate foreigners; and, second, the existence of the illiterate among the native born. In twenty or twenty-five years the unfortunate illiterates now living will have passed away, and we would then have become, virtually, a nation of intelligent voters.

Let us, therefore, free ourselves of these two impediments—both native and foreign—and the end will be attained. It will take time, but the glorious re-

sults will last forever, for enactments of laws to secure the nation against the evils of illiterate voting would never be repealed.

Let the rule apply to all native classes—white or colored—for in these days of public schools there is no excuse for either class failing; the whole political fraternity would take an interest in the matter, and thus stimulate the embryo voter to qualify himself. Moreover, if the friends of the measure secure in its favor the influence of the women, no self-respecting young man would incur the disgrace of being an illiterate.

Congress has the right to impose conditions in the Territories and in the District of Columbia on which young men can vote, and it also has the constitutional authority to impose conditions, as it has in some respects already done, on which to admit foreigners to the privileges of citizenship.

According to the American idea the ultimate authority inheres in the people, but that does not preclude legislative bodies whom the people delegate to make laws from acting in the premises, since they are presumed in a collective capacity to know more of the underlying principles of laws than their constituents. Hence the Legislatures should enact measures that they deem beneficial for the people, and trust to time and the good influence of the laws themselves to make them popular.

J. HARRIS PATTON.

## II.

THE statements of S. S. Herrick, M.D., in the February number of THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, regarding Clairvoyance, Mesmerism, and Spiritualism, may be easily offset by an equal number of equally positive assertions on the other side. For example, I venture to say that clairvoyance is a normal human power; having no necessary relation to "fortune-telling;" that its intelligent believers are not "satisfied with vague shadows," but only with demonstrative facts; that wherever Mesmerism has been thoroughly investigated by competent persons, whether "scientists" or others, they have been convinced of its substantial reality; that the conclusions of Braid and of Carpenter in no way invalidate its claims; that neither artificial nor natural somnambulism is rationally explainable aside from the hypothesis of spirit-intervention; that apparitions are not in all cases "visual hallucinations," but that a class of them (called materialized apparitions) is becoming increasingly common which are tangible, ponderable and audible, as well as visible, and that, too, by educated, sane, and numbers of healthy people at the same time; that Spiritualism proper has nothing in common with jugglery, and that "unconscious muscular action" utterly fails to explain a large part of its common phenomena; that the hand of a writing medium does not act without the governance of *some* will, but often evinces the control of a will or mind far more capable and intelligent than the medium's own; that the utterances of trance-speakers, often and usually exhibit not only coherency but mental power far superior to that shown by the same speakers when not entranced; that Spiritualism is capable of many and most valuable practical applications, some of which its rational adherents have already realized to a reasonable extent, and which will, doubtless, be far more fully developed ere

1886 years (the age of Christianity) shall have passed away; that it is not received by its intelligent adherents "by faith without evidence, or contrary to the best evidence," but its special feature is that it brings with it most cogent and convincing evidences to all open and ingenuous minds—which cannot be said of the popular religious theories, and that, while, indeed, its supposed occult phenomena have been found, by those who have given them due attention, to be "conformable to established laws," yet those laws involve the existence and agency of invisible beings, who, doubtless, always did and always will surround and act upon incarnated humanity.

Further, it would be no difficult task for one having the leisure, to maintain these assertions (or most of them) with incontrovertible facts drawn from authentic sources, including the testimony of some of the brightest names on the roll of science—facts sufficient to fill your pages for a year to come, without by any means exhausting the supply. But not supposing that your pages are open to such matter, I shall not undertake any part of this task. Meanwhile, I assume that dogmatic assertion on the one side is quite as good as on the other—and a little better on the side that is prepared to back it up by facts.

A. E. NEWTON.

### III.

I HAVE lately came into possession of this interesting letter addressed to Mrs. Cornelia L. Hopkins, of Alexandria, Virginia, by Colonel Aaron Burr, in reference to his trial, then pending, for high treason.

RICHMOND, 16 *Augt*, 1807.

HAVING never been charged with, nor ever incurred the suspicion of, treason against love or friendship, I may without presumption conclude that your regard will not be forfeited by any lesser crimes, that you continue to take an interest in my welfare and will be gratified to hear of the progress of my business. If I should not have deceived myself in this conclusion you shall hear from me when anything of moment shall occur in the course of the trial.

We shall actually commence to-morrow. The jury will be completed out of the second panel, though of the same description of persons as the first.

Tender to Mr. W—— my best regards and be pleased to accept assurances of the devoted respect and attachment with which

I am your faithful serv't,

A. BURR.